

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
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TAGS: PFOR, AO,CG

SUBJECT: BORDER ATTACK ON ZAIRE - U.S. PRESS TREATMENT
MARCH 23

1. FOLLOWING PARAS GIVE SYNOPSIS U.S. PRESS TREATMENT OF
EVENTS IN ZAIRE.

2. WASHINGTON POST: IN A FRONT-PAGE STORY, THE POST
REPORTS THAT THE U.S. HAS ENCOURAGED NIGERIA TO ACT AS
A GO-BETWEEN IN THE ZAIRE-ANGOLA DISPUTE. NIGERIAN FOREIGN
MINISTER, JOSEPH GARBA MET YESTERDAY WITH AMBASSADOR
YOUNG, AFTER MEETINGS THE PREVIOUS DAY WITH U.S. OFFICIALS
INCLUDING AMBASSADOR SCHAUFEL. ZAIRE FOREIGN MINISTER
HAS BEEN VISITING IN LAGOS.

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-- REPORTING FROM KOLWEZI, ROBIN WRIGHT SAYS THAT THE
ZAIRE AIR FORCE HAS BEGUN A BOMBING AND ROCKET CAMPAIGN
AGAINST FOUR REBEL STRONGHOLDS IN SOUTHERN SHABA IN AN
ATTEMPT TO ROUT SOME 1,500 KATANGAN INVADERS. HOWEVER,
IT IS QUESTIONABLE HOW EFFECTIVE THE BOMBING CAN BE. THE
INVADERS ARE USING GUERRILLA TACTICS AND ARE OPERATING

AFTER DARK. FURTHERMORE THE AREA IS DENSE WITH FORESTS THAT PROVIDE EASY COVER FOR REBELS WHO KNOW THE TERRITORY WELL. WHILE MOBUTU CLAIMED THE RETAKING OF KASAJI, HIS OWN GENERAL BUMBA SAID THE INVADERS WERE STILL HOLDING THE TOWN.

3. NEW YORK TIMES: MICHAEL KAUFMAN HAS TWO ARTICLES IN THE TIMES. THE FIRST STATES THAT THE OUTLOOK FOR ZAIRE APPEARS DIFFICULT. DESPITE OPTIMISTIC OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS OF SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES THERE ARE STRONG INDICATIONS IN KINSHASA THAT ZAIRE CONTINUES TO FACE FIERCE AND STEADFAST OPPOSITION IN ITS ATTEMPT TO DIS- LODGE KATANGAN INSURGENTS. IN THE SECOND PIECE, KAUFMAN WRITES THAT AFTER NEARLY A DECADE OF RELATIVE STABILITY, ZAIRE ONCE AGAIN FACES THE THREAT OF FRAGMENTATION AS AN ARMY OF DISSIDENTS HARBORING A 16-YEAR OLD GRUDGE HAS INVADDED FROM ANGOLA. SOME SOURCES BELIEVE THE ULTIMATE AIM OF THE INVADERS IS TO CREATE A SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO MOBUTU'S GENERALLY PRO-WESTERN AND PRO-CHINESE GOVERNMENT.

4. THE BALTIMORE SUN: AN ARTICLE FROM WASHINGTON ATTRIBUTED TO KNI DRAWS PARALLELS BETWEEN THE ARGUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM AND THOSE BEING USED IN SUPPORT OF OUR ASSISTANCE OF ZAIRE.

-- AP REPORTS FROM KINSHASA GROWING EVIDENCE THAT INVADING KATANGESE GENDARMES ARE FIRMLY ENTRENCHED AND FIGHTING STRONGLY.

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-- MARY MCGRORY WRITES THAT DESPITE CARTER'S REFRESH- ING RHETORIC HIS ADMINISTRATION IS RESPONDING IN THE TRADITIONAL WAY TO ZAIRE'S APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE. VANCE

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